

# Israel

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## Snapshot

### Area

20,700 square kilometers; Israel is located in the Middle East, along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea.

### Population

7,836,300 (2011 est.)

### Official Language

The official languages are Hebrew and Arabic.

### Ethnic Groups

The largest ethnic group is Jewish (75.3%) followed by Arabs (20.5%). Smaller minorities include Negev Bedouins, Druze, Christians, Circassians and Samaritans (4.2%).

### Median Age

28.6 years

### Children under 5

Almost 1 million children

### Sources

CBS (2011)

[http://www.cbs.gov.il/shnaton62/st02\\_19.pdf](http://www.cbs.gov.il/shnaton62/st02_19.pdf)

Israel Wonders

[http://www.goisrael.gov.il/tourism\\_heb2/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.goisrael.gov.il/tourism_heb2/Pages/default.aspx)



**"There are no bad children. There are children who feel bad."**

**-Janusz Korczak**

## Demographics

Music therapy as a profession was founded as part of the Israeli Association of Creative and Expressive Therapies (I.C.E.T) in 1971. In music therapy, four main areas of practice have developed throughout the years: Music psychotherapy, music in medicine, music in special education, and community music therapy. Currently, there are four music therapy training programs located at Bar Ilan University in Ramat Gan, David Yellin College in Jerusalem, Levinsky College in Tel Aviv, and Haifa University. There is legislation in motion to license people as music, art, drama, dance-movement, and psychodrama therapists as well as bibliotherapists.

There are approximately 120 music therapists who are registered in the professional association, though the total number of music therapists in the country is higher. Music therapists in Israel work with a wide range of populations in a variety of settings, as well as in private practice and as program administrators.

## Background Information

The majority of music therapists in Israel work with children. However,

only about 15% work with children under the age of five. Practitioners provide services for young children and their families in settings such as child developmental centers, children's day care centers, children's wards in hospitals, therapeutic and rehabilitation centers, kindergartens for children with special needs, early intervention programs for children at risk, and private practice.

The following are a few examples of such centers and associations which provide music therapy services:

- The Association for Children At Risk  
<http://www.childrenatrisk.co.il/en/index.asp>
- The Multidisciplinary Center for Children with Hearing Loss (MICHA)  
<http://www.michata.org.il/page8.html>
- Israeli Rett Syndrome Foundation  
<http://www.rettisrael.org/84636/English>
- The Association for Advancing Blind Children and those who Suffer from Vision Deficiencies (ELYA)  
<http://www.eliya.org.il/>

- The National Association for the Habilitation of Children and Adults with Intellectual Disabilities (AKIM) <http://akimisrael.com/>
- The Israeli Foundation for Handicapped Children (ILAN) [http://www.ilan-israel.co.il/index.php?page\\_id=2](http://www.ilan-israel.co.il/index.php?page_id=2)
- The Israeli Society for Autistic Children (ALUT) <http://alutfriends.org/>

## Common Approaches

The main approach used by music therapists working with children under 5 is "music as therapy" – an approach that emphasizes music as the main and sometimes only therapeutic element in therapy (e.g., Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy, Orff Music Therapy). When parents are included, the therapists use "music in therapy" – an approaches that uses words and music in the therapeutic process.

There are various music activities which are used by music therapists, such as singing and vocal improvisation, creating songs and using action songs, music and movement, improvisation and role playing with instruments, and listening to songs and/or short classical compositions. Other approaches include combinations of music-art therapy (e.g., painting and sculpting while listening to music), and music-drama therapy (i.e., creating musicals, musical games, and stories).

Group music activities are specially designed for children according to the children's needs and capabilities. Activities such as group drumming, using the body as an instrument, circle games, creating and singing songs, and dancing to music can encourage a feeling of togetherness, strengthen self-confidence, and improve self and body image.

There are specific issues, which need to get special attention when working with children and their families in Israel. Israel is a multicultural society, including immigrants from around the world. There are also refugees and foreign workers who live in the country. Many of them,

children included, suffer from a shaken identity, cultural loss, and have difficulties in adjusting to a new life. Music therapists who work with these children use music to build and strengthen self- and cultural identity, foster a better understanding between generations and help children, and their parents in dealing with personal and cultural challenges.

Being located in the Middle East, Israel's existence is under constant threat. Many Israelis, including children, suffer from traumas caused by wars and terrorist attacks. Music therapists who work with children suffering from trauma, use music to reduce tension and anxiety and to express and release feelings such as anger, frustration, fear and helplessness.

## Prominent Publications

- Amir, D., & Yair, M. (2008). Music therapy for children at-risk living in residential care. In Susan J. Hadley (Ed.) *Qualitative inquiries in music therapy: A monograph series*, (pp. 113-116). Gilsum, NH: Barcelona Publishers.
- Kerem, D. (2009). The effect of music therapy on spontaneous communicative interactions of young children with cochlear implants. Retrieved from [http://www.mt-phd.aau.dk/digitalAssets/6/6487\\_kerem\\_phd\\_thesis\\_22062010.pdf](http://www.mt-phd.aau.dk/digitalAssets/6/6487_kerem_phd_thesis_22062010.pdf)

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## About the Author



Dorit Amir, D.A., CMT is the Head of the music therapy program at Bar Ilan University, Israel. She was born in Israel and has lived and worked there as a music therapist, researcher, and educator. Dr. Amir has worked with children who have emotional, social and behavioral issues, with women who have experienced trauma in their lives and with people who want to improve their health and quality of life. She lectured and taught in the USA, Germany, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Australia, and New Zealand.

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